

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **2003 WSP Field Operations Bureau Summary Released**

The Field Operations Bureau of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) provided the citizens of Washington with a productive 2003 in terms of outputs/efficiencies and, most importantly, in terms of outcomes/effectiveness. **Statewide, DUI arrests were up 21% (22,472 total), speed citations were up 8% (261,004 total), seat belt citations were up 22% (84,889 total), and aggressive driving citations were up 54% (53,642 total). These outputs are significantly and positively correlated to improved safety on all of Washington State's highways where injury collisions were reduced by 8% and total fatal collisions were reduced by 11%.**

This level of success can only be accomplished through the dedication, professionalism, and focused efforts of a large group of individuals working together as a team. The WSP's Field Operations Bureau (FOB) is proud to present a summary of success stories from each FOB district.

### **District 1**

District 1, which is comprised by all of Pierce and Thurston counties, experienced several instances of individual heroism and work performance that has become almost common among members of the FOB.

- January 2 – Trooper Elliott George was nominated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for his life-saving efforts in pulling an unconscious traffic collision victim from a passenger car fully engulfed by flames. Trooper George finished second among all states in the International Association of Chiefs of Police "Trooper of the Year" Award.
- Illegal drugs with a street value in excess of \$20,000 were seized during a routine traffic stop in Tacoma on April 12. Trooper Michael Harmon initiated a traffic stop of a vehicle for a seat belt violation. Subsequent investigation resulted in the arrest of an 18-year-old Tacoma male for unlawful possession of prescription drugs. A search incident to this arrest revealed a loaded Smith & Wesson 9mm pistol and \$1,600 in cash. Trooper Jeff Hall and K9 partner Tracer arrived. Using a consent to search the trunk, they located 200 grams of crack and powder cocaine in the spare tire compartment.
- On December 5 at 1:45 p.m., Trooper Michael Harmon received information that the Columbia Bank in Tacoma had just been robbed. Trooper Harmon observed a suspected vehicle a short time later and was led on a short pursuit before the suspect abandoned the vehicle. Trooper Harmon proceeded to chase the suspect on foot for nearly a mile before apprehending the suspect without further incident. The suspect was turned over to the Tacoma Police Department for further investigation.

## **District 2**

District 2 encompasses King County, the most populated metropolitan area in Washington State. King County is home to 2,304,480 licensed drivers. Our efforts ultimately resulted in 9 less fatalities in 2003.

- DUI arrests increased 42% from 2,432 (2002) to 3,457 (2003).
- Speed contacts increased 20% from 72,256 (2002) to 86,758 (2003).
- Seat belt contacts increased 20% from 9,647 (2002) to 11,669 (2003).
- Aggressive driving contacts soared 62% from 4,825 (2002) to 7,842 (2003).

In addition to using enforcement and education to save lives, District 2 troopers built a bridge with minority communities in 2003. On November 20, District 2 hosted a Town Meeting on Racial Profiling at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Seattle. The meeting opened a dialogue between the WSP, the individuals attending, and the communities they represent. As a result, a bridge was forged between the WSP and the Apostolic Clergy Advisory Council (ACAC). The ACAC is a growing group of African-American pastors and church representatives. District 2 is working with ACAC to establish ongoing discussion and ride-a-long opportunities.

## **District 3**

District 3, which includes Yakima and the Tri-Cities in Eastern Washington, experienced dramatic successes in the category most fundamental to law enforcement—lives saved. The below results perfectly capture the positive effects of combined enforcement and education efforts to increase seat belt use and decrease incidents of DUIs to save lives:

	2002	2003	% of Change
Fatal Collisions	55	33	-40%
DUI-Involved Fatal Collisions	18	4	-78%
Fatalities Wearing a Seat Belt	19	16	-16%
Felony Collisions	19	7	-63%

These successes are summarized in the following account provided by Sergeant Tom Foster who recently investigated a one-car, non-injury, rollover crash. Sergeant Foster, as part of his investigation, asked the driver if everyone was wearing a seat belt. She replied, “Thank God for Click-it-or-Ticket. I used to never wear a seat belt before you guys did Click-it-or-Ticket, now I always do and it saved my life today.”

## **District 4**

District 4, which includes a combination of very rural areas and the state’s second most populous urban area, Spokane, used partnerships with a variety of news sources to provide a significant educational component in their efforts to save lives.

- A press release highlighting winter driving tips was so well-received that it was broadcast by the local television station and led to the development of 12 related public service announcements that aired on all six Clear Channel radio stations. The press release included tips for both urban and rural winter driving conditions.
- Trooper Brad Hudson partnered with a local radio station to create a show called “That’s the Ticket.” The show was a series of public service announcements providing driving tips for specific situations that drivers may find themselves in.
- Local Problem Oriented Public Safety (POPS) troopers initiated a project to reduce aggressive driving in Spokane County. The project included an extensive educational component using multiple television, radio, and print media interviews along with several

ride-alongs to demonstrated the serious and prevalent aggressive driving problem in the community.

### **District 5**

District 5, which includes Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, and Skamania counties, highlights the incredible success of its Clark County DUI Team. The DUI team, comprised of one sergeant and four troopers, was allowed to focus on arresting DUIs rather than responding to calls for service. Several print and television media sources conducted ride-alongs and produced stories about the team. The team arrested 246 DUIs in a ten-week period from October 21-December 31. In addition, they made 87 drug arrests, 103 suspended driver arrests, contacted 56 aggressive drivers, 598 speeders, and served 43 arrest warrants. The result of this extraordinary traffic law enforcement effort was a 12.25% decrease in collisions on state and interstate highways in Clark County from 2002 to 2003.

### **District 6**

District 6 is all of north central Washington and includes Okanogan, Douglas, Chelan, Kittitas, and Grant counties. Troopers in District 6 had a remarkable year in several areas of traffic law enforcement. Following is just a small example of their successes:

- November 2003 saw the conclusion of the Moses Lake SR 17 Corridor Project that resulted in an 80% reduction in fatality collisions on SR 17 from 15 collisions to 3! This reduction occurred over a period of 18 months.
- Trooper Brent Dell stopped a vehicle on SR 97 in October after he saw the driver throw a lighted cigarette out the window. Trooper Dell was suspicious of the vehicle occupants and obtained consent to search the vehicle. Trooper Dell located 444 pounds of marijuana and 115 pounds of Ephedrine in the back of the vehicle with a street value of \$2.5 million. This is the largest single drug seizure as a result of a traffic stop in state history.
- District 6 troopers arrested 1,000 DUIs for the first time in 2002. In 2003, they arrested 1,762 DUIs!
- Trooper Bart Olson, while working with a specially deployed strike team for the 2003 Apple Blossom in Wenatchee, arrested a male suspect for two outstanding felony child rape warrants. During a search incident to arrest, Trooper Olson discovered the suspect was in possession of a loaded stolen gun and 12 Ecstasy pills. The reason for the traffic stop...no seat belt!

### **District 7**

District 7 is all of Northwest Washington, including Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, and Island counties.

- Operation 212: A partnership established with the local Department of Transportation (DOT) office to reduce the large amount of garbage being left at I-5 rest areas in Snohomish County. There are three rest areas on I-5 in Snohomish County and each is equipped with large trash dumpsters for travelers to use in order to limit highway littering. It was quite common for these dumpsters to be full and overflowing with garbage left by local citizens who were illegally using the rest areas as a free garbage/waste disposal site. The large amount of garbage was costing the DOT \$2,000/month in clean-up, with an additional \$2,000 anticipated to keep up with the increasing amount of waste.

The WSP began working covertly to watch for people who were illegally dumping waste at the rest areas and began a vigorous enforcement effort that resulted in ten \$1,000 littering citations in a recent two-week period. The troopers also arrested six people for drug possession, discovered a pipe-bomb, and cited 20 people for soliciting prostitution within the

rest areas. All of this criminal activity has led to the involvement of the local Snohomish County Drug Task Force and U.S. Customs agents.

The result is a reduction by one-half the amount of waste and garbage now at the rest areas. DOT workers are able to spend more time on other maintenance issues and were not required to spend the additional \$2,000 for added garbage collection. Most importantly, citizens now have cleaner and safer rest areas to use when traveling on Snohomish County's highways.

### **District 8**

District 8 encompasses the Olympic Peninsula and the Pacific Coast counties of Washington including Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Grays Harbor, Pacific, and Wahkiakum. There are outstanding results to report for 2003 from the hard work of the men and women of District 8, including:

- Fatality collisions were down 24% and injury collisions down over 6% in 2003 compared to 2002.
- In one of the most compelling stories of 2003, Trooper Tyler Drake likely saved the life of a woman who had been abducted from Kent. On May 12, Trooper Drake stopped a vehicle for speeding in Grays Harbor County. The driver pulled a gun on Trooper Drake, who immediately disarmed the suspect and placed him into custody without further incident. Trooper Drake then discovered a 52 year-old woman hiding in the back of the vehicle. She had been beaten and shot several times with a pellet gun.
- Kitsap County has undertaken a coordinated effort of education and enforcement to reduce the number of collisions on SR 3, SR 310, and SR 304. The partnership includes the WSP, the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission, the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office, the Bremerton Police Department, Kitsap Transit, Kitsap Traffic Safety Task Force, and the U.S. Military. A Web site, <http://www.kitsaptransit.org/safetyproject/index.htm>, has been established to help raise community awareness.

### **Aviation Section**

- In 2003, Aviation Section pilots detected over 17,000 speeding vehicles, including over 1,100 aggressive drivers. In the summer of 2003, the WSP began operating LoJack-equipped aircraft. These newly equipped traffic aircraft assisted in nearly 60% of the Patrol's LoJack-generated recoveries last year.
- During 2003, Aviation Section aircraft carried over 2,000 passengers in over 2,100 transportation flight hours.
- In 2003, the Patrol's traffic congestion management program, known as Metro, prevented 686 miles of traffic backup and saved over \$1,227,000 in traffic-congestion-related costs.

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